UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

Case No. 1:25-cv-22896-KMW

FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES, INC., a Florida not-for-profit corporation, and CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization,

Plaintiffs,

VS.

KRISTI NOEM, in her official capacity as Secretary of the UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY; TODD LYONS, in his official capacity as Acting Director of the UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT; KEVIN GUTHRIE, in his official capacity as Executive Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management; and MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, a political subdivision of the State of Florida,

Defendants.

and

THE MICCOSUKEE TRIBE OF INDIANS,

Intervenors.

DECLARATION OF MIRANDA MCNEIL

- 1. My name is Miranda McNeil, and I make this declaration on personal knowledge.
- 2. I am the senior social media strategist at the Center for Biological Diversity.
- 3. On August 25, 2025, I visited the website for the Florida Channel, a public affairs programming service funded by The Florida Legislature and produced and operated by WFSU-

TV,¹ and watched a video titled "7/16/25 Governor's Press Conference on Florida's Economy" from 40:40 to 44:28. The video is available at the following link: https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/7-16-25-governors-press-conference-on-floridas-economy/.

- 4. On August 25, 2025, I visited the website for the Florida Channel and watched a video titled "8/14/25 Governor's Press Conference" from 6:46 to 10:38. The video is available at the following link: https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/8-14-25-governors-press-conference/.
- 5. On August 25, 2025, I visited NewsMax's official Facebook page and reviewed the July 2, 2025 interview with DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin from 00:46 to 00:55, available at https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1432066694599692.
- 6. On August 25, 2025, I visited Local10.com to read an article and watch a video titled "Florida AG says state will 'continue operating' facility dubbed 'Alligator Alcatraz' despite judge ruling" from 1:26 to 1:44, available at https://www.local10.com/news/local/2025/08/24/florida-ag-says-state-will-continue-operating-facility-dubbed-alligator-alcatraz-despite-judge-ruling/. The PDF copy of the article attached as Exhibit 1 is a true and correct copy of the article.
- 7. On August 25, 2025, I visited AP.com and reviewed the July 1, 2025 article by Adrianna Gomez Licon and Will Weissert, titled "Trump tours Florida immigration lockup and jokes about escapees having to run from alligator," available at https://apnews.com/article/trump-everglades-immigrant-detention-facility-visit-5dc5568ec15534947c29c9149b773d1d. The PDF copy of the article attached as Exhibit 2 is a true and correct copy of the article.
- 8. On August 25, 2025, I visited WUSF.org and reviewed the July 8, 2025 article by Nancy Guan, titled "Immigration arrests are up nationwide. Here's a look at Florida's numbers,"

-

 $^{^{1}\,\}underline{\text{https://thefloridachannel.org/about-tfc/who-we-are/.}}$

available at https://www.wusf.org/politics-issues/2025-07-08/immigration-arrests-up-nationwide-heres-a-look-at-floridas-numbers. The PDF copy of the article attached as Exhibit 3 is a true and correct copy of the article.

- 9. On August 25, 2025, I visited MiamiHerald.com and reviewed the July 13, 2025 article by Ana Ceballos, Claire Healy, Shirsho Dasgupta, and Ben Winder titled "Exclusive: Hundreds at Alligator Alcatraz have no criminal charges, Miami Herald learns," available at https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/immigration/article310541810.html. The PDF copy of the article attached as Exhibit 4 is a true and correct copy of the article.
- 10. On August 25, 2025, I visited MiamiHerald.com and reviewed the July 14, 2025 article by Ana Ceballos, Ben Winder, Claire Healy and Shirsho Dasgupta titled, "Is your family member or client at Alligator Alcatraz? We obtained a list, available at https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/immigration/article310541770.html. The PDF copy of the article attached as Exhibit 5 is a true and correct copy of the article.
- 11. On August 25, 2025, I visited MiamiHerald.com and reviewed the August 19, 2025 article by Ben Wieder, Ana Ceballos, Shirsho Dasgupta and Ana Claudia Chacin, titled 'Psychological warfare': Internal data shows true nature of Alligator Alcatraz, available at https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/immigration/article311718011.html. The PDF copy of the article attached as Exhibit 6 is a true and correct copy of the article.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on August 25, 2025.

Miranda McNeil
Miranda McNeil

Exhibit 1



Florida AG says state will 'continue operating' facility dubbed 'Alligator Alcatraz' despite judge ruling



 $^{&#}x27;Alligator\ Alcatraz'\ to\ remain\ operational\ despite\ judge's\ order,\ Florida\ AG\ says$

COLLIER COUNTY, Fla. — The effort to reverse a judge's ruling to shutdown 'Alligator Alcatraz' is ramping up.

Currently, the state of Florida is requesting the court halt a judge's recent decision to dismantle the embattled migrant detention center within 60 days.

The decision came after environmentalists filed a lawsuit claiming the state bypassed a federal mandate requiring a study to determine the impact on the Everglades.

Florida's Attorney General James Uthmeier spoke to news outlet <u>WINK</u> over the phone, saying he's standing firm in his position and has already filed a notice to appeal.

"We're going to continue operating the facility," he said. "We believe that it's a fully lawful facility. This is an effort by environmentalists, by the left, by Democrats and by honestly this judge, to stall our immigration enforcement efforts. They do not like the deportations."

The state is requesting the court to halt the order to shut down the site by Monday at 5 p.m.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Linnie SupallLinnie Supall is an Emmy nominated and award-winning journalist.



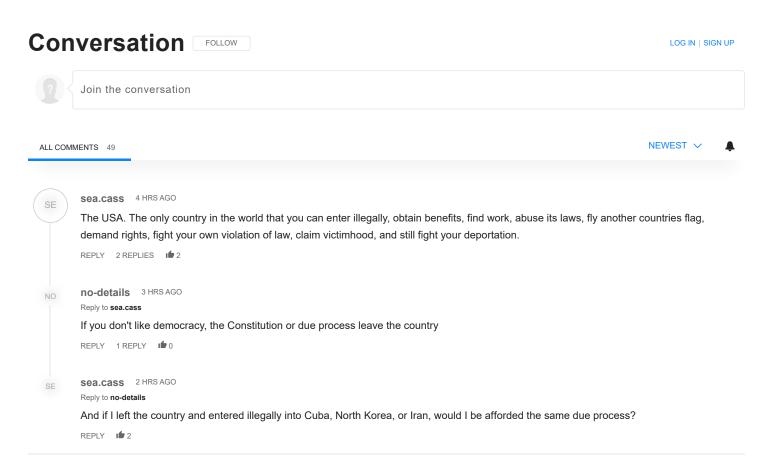


Exhibit 2

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Trump administration

POLITICS

Trump tours Florida immigration lockup and jokes about escapees having to run from alligators

President Donald Trump visited a new immigration detention center in the Florida Everglades on Tuesday as state officials showcased what critics are condemning as an inhumane makeshift prison camp and what supporters are embracing as a national model for aggressively ramping up detention and deportation efforts.

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BY ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON AND WILL WEISSERT

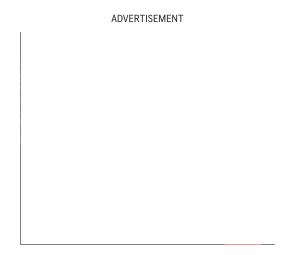
Updated 5:27 PM EDT, July 1, 2025

OCHOPEE, Fla. (AP) — President <u>Donald Trump</u> on Tuesday toured a <u>new immigration detention center</u> surrounded by alligator-filled swamps in the Florida Everglades, suggesting it could be a model for future lockups nationwide as his administration races to expand the infrastructure necessary for increasing deportations.

Trump said he'd like to see similar facilities in "really, many states" and raised the prospect of also deporting U.S. citizens. He even endorsed having Florida National Guard forces possibly serve as immigration judges to ensure migrants are ejected from the country even faster.

"Pretty soon, this facility will handle the most menacing migrants, some of the most vicious people on the planet," Trump said of the Florida site known as "Alligator Alcatraz."

The president said the moniker is "very appropriate because I looked outside and that's not a place I want to go hiking anytime soon."



[&]quot;The only way out, really, is deportation," Trump added.

Hundreds of protesters converged outside the site — a remote airstrip with tents and trailers. They waved signs calling for the humane treatment of migrants as well as the protection of the expansive preserve that is home to a few Native American tribes and many endangered animal species.

The administration sees the location as a plus

The White House has delighted in the area's remoteness — about 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of Miami — and the fact that it is teeming with pythons and alligators. It hopes to convey a message to detainees and the rest of the world that repercussions will be severe if the immigration laws of the United States are not followed.

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Before arriving, Trump even joked of migrants being held there, "We're going to teach them how to run away from an alligator if they escape prison."



Environmental advocates and protesters at the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport on Tamiami Trail E, Ochopee, Fla., on Saturday, June 28, 2025, object to the "Alligator Alcatraz" being built at the facility. (Mike Stocker /South Florida Sun-Sentinel via AP)

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"Don't run in a straight line. Run like this," Trump said, as he moved his hand in a zigzag motion. "And you know what? Your chances go up about 1%." Alligator experts suggest it is better to dash in one direction in the rare situation when the reptile gives chase, according to a website run by the University of Florida.

Trump on his tour walked through medical facilities and other parts of the detention center, then held a lengthy roundtable where Florida <u>Gov. Ron DeSantis</u> and assorted state and federal officials heaped him with praise.

Authorities originally suggested it could house up to 5,000 detainees upon completion, but DeSantis said it would actually hold around 3,000, with some starting to arrive Wednesday.

The center was built in eight days over 10 miles (16 kilometers) of Everglades. It features more than 200 security cameras, 28,000-plus feet (8,500 meters) of barbed wire and 400 security personnel.

Trump dismissed concerns about the impact on delicate ecosystems, saying that since the airstrip was already there, authorities wouldn't have to be "dropping dirt."

"I don't think you've done anything to the Everglades," Trump said. "I think you're just enhancing it."

Other, though, are appalled, including Phyllis Andrews, a retired teacher who drove from Naples, Florida, to protest Trump's visit and called migrants "fine people."

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"They do not deserve to be incarcerated here," Andrews said.

Some Trump supporters showed up near the detention center as well, including <u>Enrique Tarrio</u>, a former leader of the Proud Boys whom Trump pardoned for his conviction related to the <u>Jan. 6, 2021</u>, <u>assault on the U.S. Capitol</u>. He suggested Trump won last year's election because voters wanted "mass deportation" and "retribution."

Part of a larger Trump immigration push

Crackdowns on the U.S.-Mexico border and harsh immigration policies have long been a centerpiece of Trump's political brand. During his first term, Trump denied reports that he floated the idea of building a moat filled with alligators at the southern border.

Trump has more recently suggested that his administration could <u>reopen Alcatraz</u>, the notorious island prison off San Francisco. The White House similarly promoted the political shock value of sending some immigrants awaiting deportation to a detention lockup in <u>Guantánamo Bay, Cuba</u>, and others to <u>a megaprison in El Salvador</u>.

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His administration has vowed that mass deportations are coming, even if some of those notions are impractical. Transforming Alcatraz from a tourist attraction into a prison would be very costly, and Guantánamo Bay is being used less often than administration officials originally envisioned.

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Trump also mused Tuesday about deporting dangerous people born in the United States, like ones who "knife you when you're walking down the street" or who kill people from behind with a baseball bat.



This satellite photo captured by Planet Labs PBC on June 25, 2025, shows white structures cropping up on an airstrip in Ochopee, Fla., in the Everglades, where state officials are building an immigration detention facility. (Planet Labs PBC via AP)

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"They're not new to our country. They're old to our country. Many of them were born in our country. I think we ought to get them the hell out of here, too," Trump said. "So maybe that'll be the next job that we'll work on together."

Alluding to his <u>criminal indictments</u> during President Joe Biden's administration, Trump said of the detention facility, "Biden wanted me here," using an expletive to describe his predecessor.

Construction of the Everglades site came together fast

Florida plans to offer up members of the National Guard to be "deputized" and assist immigration judges as a way to loosen another chokepoint in the country's long-overburdened immigration court system. Guard personnel could provide security along the perimeter and entry control points and help staff the site, officials say.

The detention center has an estimated annual cost of \$450 million, but state officials say at least some of that will be covered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency — which is best known for responding to hurricanes and other natural disasters.

During his tour, Trump greeted around 20 FEMA employees and construction workers and bonded with DeSantis, who once bitterly challenged him for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

"We have blood that seems to match pretty well," Trump said of Florida's governor. When DeSantis suggested that members of the Guard could ease immigration judges' workloads, Trump offered, "He didn't even have to ask me. He has my approval."

A spokesperson for the Guard said that its members aren't currently tasked with detention or enforcement operations and that doing so would require training from federal authorities.

Encouraging self-deportation?

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who was also on the tour, said immigrants arriving to the site could still opt to "self-deport" and board flights to their home countries rather than being held in it. She said she hoped "my phone rings off the hook" with other states looking to follow Florida's lead and open similar sites.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainees are generally held for reasons like entering the country illegally or overstaying a visa. They are either waiting for ICE to put them on the next flight or bus ride home, or they're fighting their removal in immigration court.

As of mid-June, ICE detention facilities held more than 56,000 immigrants, the most since 2019.

During his visit, Trump was informed that the sweeping tax cut and spending bill the White House has championed <u>had cleared the Senate</u>, drawing applause. He suggested his being in Florida, rather than helping promote the bill in Washington, underscored how important immigration was as an issue.

"I'm here, and I probably should be there," he said, shortly before flying back to the White House.

Weissert reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Kate Payne in Tallahassee, Florida, Elliot Spagat in San Diego and Chris Megerian in Washington contributed to this report.



ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON

Gomez Licon writes about national politics for The Associated Press. She is based in Florida.

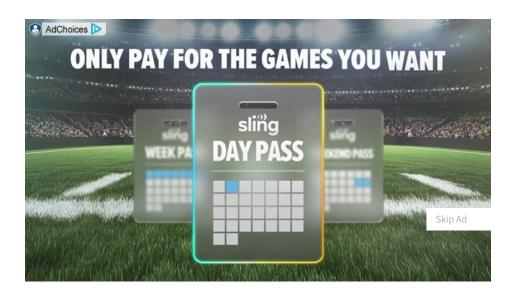




WILL WEISSERT

Weissert covers the White House for The Associated Press. He is based in Washington.





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Exhibit 3

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Immigration arrests are up nationwide. Here's a look at Florida's numbers

WUSF | By Nancy Guan

Published July 8, 2025 at 5:00 AM EDT

 \boxtimes

LISTEN • 1:02



FLHSMV

Immigration arrests have shot up during President Donald Trump's second term.

In Florida, where the governor has promised to lead the immigration crackdown, increased arrests mirror the national trend, especially for those with no criminal background.

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Case 1:25-cv-22896-KMW Document 144-2 Entered on FLSD Docket 08/25/2025 Page 17 of 47 In an effort to carry out President Donald Trump's mass deportation campaign, arrests by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents have shot up this year.

Nationally, ICE arrests have more than doubled compared to last year, according to a New York Times analysis. The rate is sitting at an average of 666 arrests per day, compared to fewer than 300 per day in 2024.

Lea esta historia en español

Looking at Florida, where Gov. Ron DeSantis has vowed to lead the way in the immigration crackdown, those numbers have tripled.

About 64 immigration arrests a day have been made statewide since Jan. 20 of this year. That's compared to 20 arrests a day in 2024.

And it makes Florida only second in the nation when it comes to the daily arrest rate. Texas leads with 142 daily arrests.

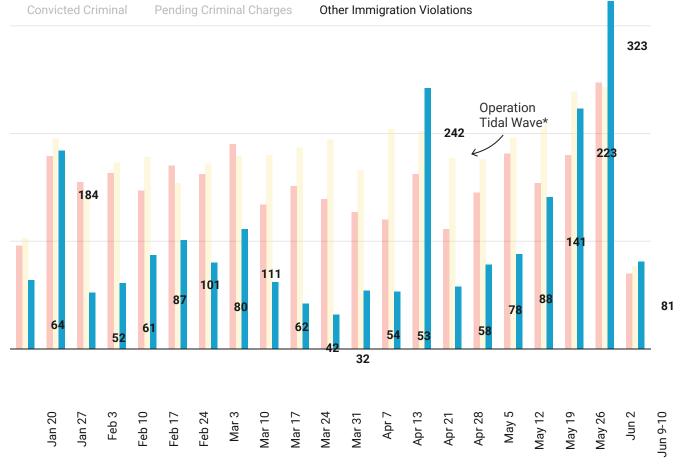
The ICE data, obtained by The Deportation Data Project, displays individual arrests through June 10. WUSF condensed this information to show weekly and monthly arrests in the following graphs.

Florida ICE Arrests 2025

Total ICE arrests have increased since January. Graph shows weekly arrest numbers. The latest data indicates that those with no criminal convictions or charges are making up a larger share of arrests.







Arrests constitute every time U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrests someone (whether or not that arrest results in a decision to detain the person) or issues a Notice to Appear, the document that starts a deportation case. Other agencies that issue NTAs are not included as arrests here. *Operation Tidal Wave was a weeklong operation between the state of Florida and federal law enforcement agencies including ICE.

Chart: Nancy Guan • Source: Deportation Data Project • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Another look at the numbers shows that more and more people with no criminal background are being arrested. At the beginning of June, noncriminal arrests have surpassed the arrests of people with criminal charges or convictions.

That was also the case for the week of April 21, during a statewide immigration crackdown called Operation Tidal Wave.

The weeklong operation resulted in what the state called "1,120 criminal illegal alien arrests — the largest number in a single state in one week in ICE's history."

However, not everyone swept up in the operation had a criminal record.

WUSF

.e state swid that ട്രാം of those arrested had "existing criminal arrests or convictions."

Case 1:25-cv-22896-KMW Document 144-2 Entered on FLSD Docket 08/25/2025 Page 19 of Note that that number includes arrests made by agencies other than ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations (which is what the data represents), like U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Marshals Service and ICE's separate Homeland Security Investigations.

Operation Tidal Wave coincided with increased reports from immigration attorneys and advocates that people were being arrested at their government mandated check-ins.

On April 22, Heidy Sánchez, a Cuban mother, was separated from her 1-year-old daughter during her appointment at the Tampa ICE office and deported to Cuba within two days.

Sánchez, who is married to a U.S. citizen, was in the process of applying for permanent residency, or a green card. She was given a deportation order during a time when Cuba was not taking back its nationals.

Instead, she was given an I-220B Order of Supervision, which allowed her to live and work in the U.S. as long as she checked in periodically with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

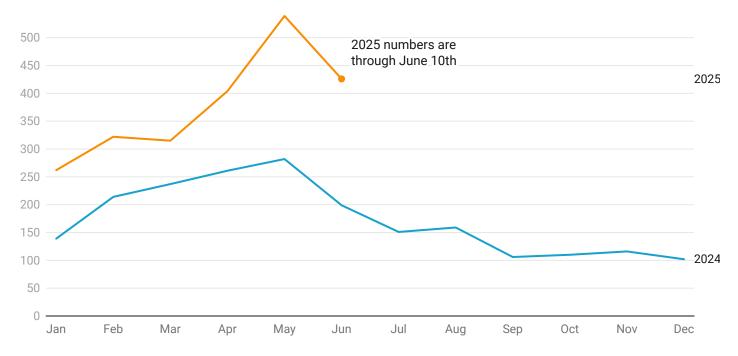
People like her, who had no other violations on their record besides the immigration offense, were considered a low priority for deportation.

But in an effort to reach its deportation goals, the administration has broadened the types of immigrants who can be arrested, according to immigration experts.

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Florida noncriminal ICE arrests 2025 vs. 2024

ICE arrests of people with no criminal charges or convictions is up compared to last year.



Arrests constitute every time U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrests someone (whether or not that arrest results in a decision to detain the person) or issues a Notice to Appear, the document that starts a deportation case. Other agencies that issue NTAs are not included as arrests here.

Chart: Nancy Guan • Source: Deportation Data Project • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Paul Chavez, an immigration attorney with the nonprofit law firm Americans for Immigrant Justice, said he's received more reports from community members about ICE sightings in neighborhoods and at immigration court and offices.

"What we've seen is a pretty big increase in arrests of folks that would have not have been arrested under previous administrations, which I think gives light to any statements that there was going to be a priority for people who had committed crimes," Chavez said.

In May, which is the most recent month with full data, noncriminal arrests have nearly doubled in the state.

Chavez pointed out that even arrests of people with criminal charges or convictions require further examination.

A report from the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, found that more than 90% of those booked into detention centers by ICE nationwide were "neither violent nor property crime offenders."

Travel With Rick Steves

Case 1:25-cv-22896-KMW Document 144-2 Entered on FLSD Docket 08/25/2025 Page 21 of 47 The most serious convictions, the report said, were "usually either an immigration offense, a traffic infraction or a nonviolent vice crime."

"I think the data reveals that it's not the worst of the worst," Chavez said.

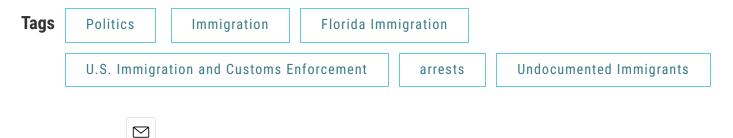
Last month, Maria Martinez, a 21-year-old from Sarasota, was arrested by local law enforcement for driving without a license and is being detained in Texas. In Florida, immigrants without legal status are not able to obtain a driver's license.

Chavez said law enforcement presence has increased on Florida's highways. Contracts called 287(g) agreements allow the state's local law enforcement agencies to work with ICE on immigration enforcement. And the state leads the nation when it comes to those partnerships.

Immigrants are stopped for traffic infractions, taken into police custody and subsequently detained by ICE.

"So, now, you have somebody that's been here 15 years, working, U.S. citizen children, no criminal background that gets picked up, and then placed in the deportation pipeline," Chavez said.

Taylor Honda contributed to the data gathering in this report.





Nancy Guan

As WUSF's general assignment reporter, I cover a variety of topics across the greater Tampa Bay region.

See stories by Nancy Guan

Exhibit 4

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IMMIGRATION

Exclusive: Hundreds at Alligator Alcatraz have no criminal charges, Miami Herald learns

By **Ana Ceballos** , **Claire Healy** , **Shirsho Dasgupta** and **Ben Wieder** *Miami Herald* Updated July 13, 2025 3:20 PM

Case 1:25-cv-22896-KMW Document 144-2 Entered on FLSD Docket 08/25/2025 Page 24 of



President Donald Trump speaks while touring a newly-constructed area for a detention camp with Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, foreground, and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, second from right, after arriving at Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport in Ochopee, Fla., on Tuesday, July 1, 2025. The airport is the planned site of a detention camp for migrants that officials in his administration have called "Alligator Alcatraz." (Doug Mills/The New York Times) DOUG MILLS NYT

Hundreds of immigrants with no criminal charges in the United States are being held at Alligator Alcatraz, a detention facility state and federal officials have characterized as a place where "vicious" and "deranged psychopaths" are sent before they get deported, records obtained by the Miami Herald/Tampa Bay Times show.

Mixed among the detainees accused and convicted of crimes are more than 250 people who are listed as having only immigration violations but no criminal convictions or pending charges in the United States. The data is based on a list of more than 700 people who are either being held under tents and in chain link cells at Florida's pop-up detention center in the Everglades or appear slated for transfer there.

Case 1:25-cv-22896-KMW Document 144-2 Entered on FLSD Docket 08/25/2025 Page 25 of 47 A third of the detainees have criminal convictions. Their charges range from attempted murder to illegal re-entry to traffic violations. Hundreds of others only have pending charges. The records do not disclose the nature of the alleged offenses, and reporters have not independently examined each individual's case.

The information — subject to change as the population of the facility fluctuates — suggests that scores of migrants without criminal records have been targeted in the state and federal dragnet to catch and deport immigrants living illegally in Florida.

Is your client or family member being held at Alligator Alcatraz? Click here to see the list

Nationally, nearly half of detainees in ICE custody as of late June were being held for immigration violations and did not have a criminal conviction or charge, according to data from Syracuse University. Polls have shown that American voters support the deportation of criminals but are less supportive of the arrest and detention of otherwise law-abiding undocumented immigrants. South Florida's congressional representatives have called on the Trump administration to be more compassionate in its efforts to round up and deport immigrants with status issues.

"That place is supposedly for the worst criminals in the U.S.," said Walter Jara, the nephew of a 56-year-old Nicaraguan man taken to the facility following a traffic stop in Palm Beach County. The list obtained by the Herald/Times states that his uncle, Denis Alcides Solis Morales, has immigration violations and makes no mention of convictions or pending criminal charges. Jara said his uncle arrived here legally in 2023 under a humanitarian parole program, and has a pending asylum case.

Reporters sent the list to officials at the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. In a statement, DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin said the absence of a criminal charge in the United States doesn't mean migrants detained at the site have clean hands.

"Many of the individuals that are counted as 'non-criminals' are actually terrorists, human rights abusers, gangsters and more; they just don't have a rap sheet in the U.S.," McLaughlin told the Herald/Times. "Further, every single one of these individuals committed a crime when they came into this country illegally. It is not an accurate description to say they are 'non-criminals."



Aerial view of structures, including gigantic tents built at the recently opened migrant detention center, "Alligator Alcatraz," located at the site of the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport in Ochopee, Florida, on Friday, July 4, 2025. (Pedro Portal/Miami Herald/TNS) Pedro Portal *TNS*

McLaughlin said the Trump administration is "putting the American people first by removing illegal aliens who pose a threat to our communities" and said "70% Case 1:25-cv-22896-KMW Document 144-2 Entered on FLSD Docket 08/25/2025 Page 27 of 47 of ICE arrests have been of criminal illegal aliens with convictions or pending charges."

She added that the state of Florida oversees the facility, not ICE, an argument echoed in court by Thomas P. Giles, a top official involved in enforcement and removal operations.

"The ultimate decision of who to detain" at Alligator Alcatraz "belongs to Florida," he wrote as part of the federal government's response to a lawsuit challenging the detention facility on environmental grounds.

A spokesperson for ICE referred reporters to Florida's Division of Emergency Management, which oversees the detention facility. The Florida agency did not respond to a request for comment.

Do you know someone detained at Alligator Alcatraz? We'd like to hear from you

Detainees by country of citizenship

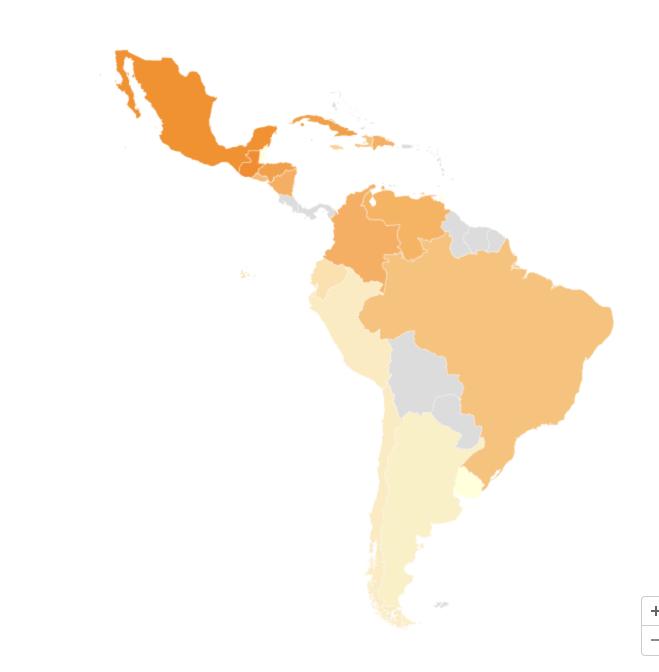
in

More than 95 percent of the individuals in the records analyzed by the Miami Herald were citizens of Latin American countries. Around a fifth of the detainees were Guatemalans, another fifth were Mexican and around a tenth were from Cuba.

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Use the button on the bottom-right to zoom in and out





Source: Miami Herald analysis

Mixed population

Case 1:25-cv-22896-KMW Document 144-2 Entered on FLSD Docket 08/25/2025 Page 29 of 47 The records offer a glimpse into who is being sent to Alligator Alcatraz. The network of trailers and tents, built on an airstrip off of U.S. Highway 41, has been operating for a little more than a week. It is already housing about 750 immigrant detainees, a figure that state officials shared with Democratic state Sen. Carlos Guillermo-Smith, one of several Florida lawmakers who toured the site on Saturday afternoon.

The records obtained by the Herald/Times show detainees are from roughly 40 countries around the world. Immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala and Cuba made up about half the list. Ages range from 18 to 73. One is listed as being from the United States. Reporters were unable to locate his family or attorney.

Lawmakers who visited the facility Saturday said they saw detainees wearing wristbands, which state officials explained were meant to classify the severity of their civil or criminal violations. The colors included yellow, orange and red — with yellow being less severe infractions and red meaning more severe offenses, said state Rep. Anna Eskamani, D-Orlando.

When the detention facility opened on July 1, President Donald Trump visited the site and said it would soon house "some of the most vicious people on the planet." He and Gov. Ron DeSantis have said the detention center is creating more space to house undocumented immigrants who otherwise would have to be released due to a lack of beds.



Rena Mourer, who is in favor of Alligator Alcatraz, waves a Betsy Ross 1776 American flag at the front entrance to Alligator Alcatraz as Florida lawmakers and members of Congress tour the detention facility located within the Florida Everglades, 36 miles west of the central business district of Miami, in Collier County, Florida Saturday, July 12, 2025. PHOTO BY AL DIAZ adiaz@miamiherald.com

The state has refused to make public a roster of detainees at Alligator Alcatraz, instead offering selective information about who is being detained there. On Friday, Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier's office released the names of six men convicted of crimes to Fox News, and later to the Herald/Times upon request. The charges against the men — all included on the list obtained by the Herald/Times — ranged from murder to burglary.

"This group of murderers, rapists, and gang members are just a small sample of the deranged psychopaths that Florida is helping President Trump and his Case 1:25-cv-22896-KMW Document 144-2 Entered on FLSD Docket 08/25/2025 Page 31 of 47 administration remove from our country," Uthmeier's spokesman, Jeremy Redfern, said in a statement.

One of those men is Jose Fortin, a 46-year-old from Honduras who was arrested in 2017 on attempted murder charges. Records show Fortin was deported to his home country in August 2019. A month later, he re-entered the country illegally. Border patrol agents picked him up in Texas.

Another man identified as a detainee by Uthmeier's office, Luis Donaldo Corado, was convicted of burglary and petty theft after he was accused of being a "peeping tom" — watching a woman through her apartment window in Coral Gables. And Eddy Lopez Jemot, a 57-year-old Cuban man, was accused of killing a woman and setting her house on fire in Key Largo in 2017. The state dropped homicide charges against him in a plea deal this year and convicted him of arson.

But other detainees left off the attorney general's list face lesser charges — such as traffic violations, according to attorneys and family members. An attorney told the Herald/Times her client was detained by federal immigration agents after a routine-check in at an ICE field office. Some are asylum seekers.

Solís Morales, the 56-year-old Nicaraguan, ended up in Alligator Alcatraz after he was unexpectedly detained on his way to a construction job in Palm Beach County on July 1, according to Jara, his nephew. He was a passenger in a Ford F-150 when the driver was pulled over by the Florida Highway Patrol for an unsecured load, Jara told the Herald/Times on Saturday.

Solís Morales arrived in the United States from Nicaragua in 2023 under humanitarian parole and has a pending asylum case, Jara said.

Case 1:25-cv-22896-KMW Document 144-2 Entered on FLSD Docket 08/25/2025 Page 32 of Miami immigration attorney Regina de Moraes said she's representing a 37-yearold Brazilian man being held at Alligator Alcatraz who entered the United States lawfully on a tourist visa in 2022 and then applied for asylum, which is pending.

She said the man, who has a five-year work permit and owns a solar panel business in the Orlando area, was arrested on a DUI charge in 2024. While he was attending a probation hearing on June 3, he was detained by the Orange County Sheriff's office, which is participating in a federal immigration program known as 287(g). He was transferred from there to Alligator Alcatraz on Thursday, according to information provided to her by the man's sister.

De Moraes, a seasoned immigration lawyer, said she doesn't understand why the Brazilian man was transferred to the state-operated detention facility in the Everglades. She asked the Herald/Times not to identify her client.

"He's not subject to mandatory detention and he's not subject to removal because he has a pending asylum application," de Moraes told the Herald/Times. "He has one DUI and he's not a threat to others. This is ridiculous. This is a waste of time and money. ... He's not the kind of person they should be picking up."

"They should be picking up people with sexual battery or armed robbery records," de Moraes said.

Miami Herald reporters Siena Duncan, Milena Malaver, Churchill Ndonwie and Jay Weaver, and el Nuevo Herald reporter Antonio Maria Delgado contributed to this report.

This story was originally published July 13, 2025 at 5:30 AM.

Want to see more content like this?





Exhibit 5

IMMIGRATION

Is your family member or client at Alligator Alcatraz? We obtained a list

By **Ana Ceballos**, **Ben Wieder**, **Claire Healy** and **Shirsho Dasgupta** Updated July 14, 2025 11:01 AM





Democrats are calling for the closure of the Everglades' "Alligator Alcatraz" after going on a tour of the immigration detention center. The center, which was quickly assembled by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, was visited by both Democratic; Republican Florida lawmakers. By Video Elephant



The Miami Herald/Tampa Bay Times has obtained a list of more than 700 people who have been detained or appear to be scheduled to be sent to the Florida-run immigration detention facility known as Alligator Alcatraz.

The DeSantis administration has not made public a list of names of the immigrants held at the facility in heavy duty tents at an airstrip in the Florida Everglades. Individuals sent to the makeshift detention center do not show up in an online government database that allows the public to search for immigrant detainees' whereabouts. Lawyers say they have had difficulty locating clients sent to the site, often learning that they are there when detainees call family members.



The list — made public for the first time here — was shared with the Department of Homeland Security and the Florida Division of Emergency Management, which oversees the site. Neither disputed its accuracy.

READ MORE: Hundreds at Alligator Alcatraz have no criminal charges or convictions, records show

The list is not exhaustive and it is subject to change as the detention facility's population fluctuates. The Herald/Times searched each of the 747 names in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Detainee Locator. Only 40 appeared on the public-facing website, most of them listed as being located at nearby facilities, and three marked with a note to "call field office."

Do you know someone detained at Alligator Alcatraz? We'd like to hear from you

The Florida Division of Emergency Management, which is overseeing the site's operations, has not said how many people are held at the facility. Democratic

lawmakers who toured the site on Saturday said detention center employees told them that there are about 750 detainees at the site.

Detainees assigned to Alligator Alcatraz

The Miami Herald obtained records of more than 700 individuals who are detained at or appear to be scheduled to be sent to the detention facility in the Everglades.

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Latest news, plus the afternoon business & national news.	Afternoon Newsletter	
	Latest news, plus the afternoon business & national news.	

Exhibit 6



IMMIGRATION

'Psychological warfare': Internal data shows true nature of Alligator Alcatraz

By Ben Wieder, Ana Ceballos, Shirsho Dasgupta and Ana Claudia Chacin



A jet is seen on the tarmac outside Alligator Alcatraz in Ochopee, Florida on Friday, July 25, 2025. PHOTO BY AL DIAZ adiaz@miamiherald.com



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A month into his detention at Alligator Alcatraz, Daniel Ortiz Piñeda faced a stark choice: continue his legal fight for asylum or give it up to hopefully put an end to his extended stay at the makeshift immigration detention camp in the Everglades.



The Colombian national, with no criminal record, had the right to remain in the country while appealing the 2023 denial of his asylum request. But last week, the 33-year-old asked his attorney to drop his appeal, preferring repatriation to the

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"He feels like there's nothing here for him now," Piñeda's mother said in an interview.



Stories like Piñeda's have played out repeatedly at the Everglades detention camp. While it was promoted as a place where migrants with heinous criminal histories would be detained and quickly deported, records exclusively obtained by the Miami Herald and Tampa Bay Times show it was largely used during its first month in operation as a holding pen and transfer hub for immigrants who were still fighting their cases in immigration courts. Hundreds, the records note, did not have criminal convictions or pending charges.

At the end of July, when the number of detainees at the site was around its peak, only one in five of the roughly 1,400 detainees at the site had been ordered removed from the country by a judge, a Herald/Times review of the records found. That means hundreds of men were being detained there without final adjudication orders, despite Gov. Ron DeSantis' claims to the contrary.



Aerial view of structures including gigantic tents built at the recently opened migrant detention center, "Alligator Alcatraz," located at the site of the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport in Ochopee, Florida on Friday July 04, 2025. Pedro Portal pportal@miamiherald.com

The records also show that nearly two out of every five immigrants listed in early July as being detained at the South Florida facility or headed there were still recorded as detainees at the facility at the end of the month.

During that stretch, immigration attorneys claimed their clients had little to no access to the courts and were largely forced to communicate about cases over recorded lines. Lawyers also alleged their clients were pressured to abandon their immigration cases — without legal consultation — and agree to be deported. It wasn't until Saturday that lawyers for the federal government said a Miami immigration court had been designated as the responsible venue for handling Alligator Alcatraz cases.

The number of people at Alligator Alcatraz fluctuates daily and has dropped drastically since the beginning of the month, as a federal judge weighs whether to shut down the site.

But for detainees held throughout July in chain-link cages and tents the uncertainty created mental pressure that their attorneys and families say was worse than the prospect of being deported, even to a country where they fear persecution.

"Putting people in tents in the middle of the Everglades is a great tool to make them give up their cases," said Mark Prada, an immigration attorney.

Tricia McLaughlin, a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson, disputed allegations that U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement is putting undue pressure on migrants when it comes to making decisions about their legal proceedings.

She called such allegations "false," and said Alligator Alcatraz was "cost-effective" and "functioning as it was always intended — to assist with deportations and processing of illegal aliens."

The Florida Division of Emergency Management, which oversees Alligator Alcatraz operations, referred questions to ICE.



Governor Ron DeSantis speaks to reporters during a press conference as he stands on the airplane runway of Alligator Alcatraz in Ochopee , Florida on Friday, July 25, 2025. PHOTO BY AL DIAZ adiaz@miamiherald.com

'Psychological warfare'

When the state seized an airstrip in the Big Cypress National Preserve and began constructing a camp to hold thousands of migrants, DeSantis said the site would serve as a "one-stop" shop for the Trump administration's needs for detention and deportation.

Detainees with final orders of removal would be held in tents and quickly deported from an on-site runway, he said. To expedite deportations, DeSantis said qualified National Guard members would work as immigration judges on the site — an idea that President Donald Trump gave a thumbs up to during a July 1 visit.

But the plans have yet to be implemented and immigration attorneys have complained for weeks that their Alligator Alcatraz clients have had hearings for their cases routinely canceled in federal Florida immigration courts by judges who said they did not have jurisdiction over the detainees in the Everglades.

For hundreds of detainees, that meant weeks of uncertainty living inside tents, where the lights were turned on throughout the day and the only connection to the outside world was often a recorded landline.

Attorneys have complained about staff at the facility pressuring their clients to sign voluntary removal orders without consulting an attorney and, in one case, deceiving a detainee with an intellectual disability by telling him he would need to "sign some paper in exchange for a blanket" — and then deporting him after he had signed it, court filings show.

Mark Hamburger, an attorney who has had several clients at the detention camp, said the conditions created a kind of "psychological warfare" for detainees.

"They're being put to the test," he said. "How long can you stand this? A lot of people are folding."

That group of original detainees included Piñeda, who was taken into custody after showing up for a scheduled immigration meeting in Miami Lakes on July 7, according to his family members.

"To have somebody detained like this, pending an appeal, when they have not committed any crimes is unheard of," said his attorney, Osley Sallent.



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Signage outside Alligator Alcatraz on Sunday, August 17, 2025, in Ochopee, Fla. D.A. Varela dvarela@miamiherald.com

Piñeda told his family members that when he entered Alligator Alcatraz, the guards told him and other new arrivals, "As soon as you come in here, you don't have any rights."

It would be days before he could shower, and he said that he hadn't received adequate medical care for an ongoing ear infection and stomach ailment. He was moved to the Glades County Detention Center west of Lake Okeechobee in early August shortly after dropping his asylum appeal.

Like Piñeda, the vast majority of detainees in the facility at the end of July had no final order of removal from a judge, according to the new data.

That means that the immigration cases for most men at the facility were still ongoing.

While the data shows that more than 100 of those detainees had been issued expedited orders of removal – which allows the government to deport them without going through the immigration courts – immigration lawyers said that these can still be appealed in some circumstances, such as when an immigrant is seeking asylum.

"Finality is a big deal," Prada said. "If it is not final, there is still a process to be done."

Where are they now?

The Herald compared the two datasets, one of roughly 750 detainees from early July and the other of roughly 1,400 people from the end of the month. Reporters also searched for all of the detainees in the first list on ICE's detainee locator system.

More than 40% of the 750 detainees in the initial list were sent not out of the country but to other ICE facilities, the Herald found. Another 40% were still at the detention center.

Alligator Alcatraz detainees often did not appear in ICE's locator system, the Herald found and the fate of the rest — around 150 detainees — is unclear. Some of them were likely still at Alligator Alcatraz but others may have been deported.

The numbers in both data sets are snapshots in time, and fluctuate as detainees enter and leave the facility. On Tuesday, there were just shy of 400 detainees at the Everglades detention camp — far below the roughly 1,500 people the makeshift camp is able to hold.

Where Alligator Alcatraz detainees have gone

Two out of five immigrants on a list of detainees from early July were moved elsewhere.



One detainee was transferred to a facility in Guantanamo Bay. Data is valid as of 08-04-25.

In late July, DeSantis said the federal government had deported about 100 people who were held at the detention camp and that "hundreds" of others had been transferred to deportation hubs in other parts of the country. The state and federal governments have yet to say if any deportation flights have taken off directly from the site and to foreign soil.

Attorneys have welcomed the transfers – which make it easier for them to access their clients and advocate on their behalf. At least two detainees were released on bond last week after they were moved elsewhere, according to their attorneys. One detainee trying to leave the country voluntarily had to be transferred to another facility to be deported.

Fernando Eduardo Artese, 63, was one of the first detainees to arrive at Alligator Alcatraz.

From the start, he wanted to leave the United States voluntarily, but the process to self-deport was not easy in the weeks he spent at the state-run site, his family said

.It was only after he was transferred to the federal Krome immigration detention center in Miami that he was able to begin the process of voluntarily leaving the country. Once at Krome, Artese was deported in less than a week, his daughter, Carla Artese, told the Herald/Times. The Argentinian-Italian was sent to Italy.



Carla Artese, 19 and her mother Monica Riveira, 62 talk to Fernando Artese on the phone who is currently in custody at Alligator Alcatraz on Saturday, July 12, 2025 in Sunrise. Luis Santana *Tampa Bay Times*

Intentional or accidental

It's not clear whether the difference between Alligator Alcatraz's promoted and practical uses was intentional or accidental.

The facility was built with near biblical speed, completed in only eight days, and from its earliest days, detainees complained of toilets that don't flush, bugs and leaky tents. Attorneys quickly flagged that they had no way to speak confidentially with their clients.

A federal judge questioned the facility's operation at a hearing in July for a lawsuit related to detainees' legal access.

"A lot of it looked to me like ... a new facility not having their act together or getting up and running in the right way," U.S. District Judge Rodolfo A. Ruiz II said last month in a court hearing.

But critics of the facility say that the harsh conditions endured by detainees — and the rhetoric politicians have used to describe the site — are not by accident. DeSantis says reporting about terrible conditions has been inaccurate, but he's in no rush to dispel the narrative.

"Maybe it will have the intent or the effect of deterring people from going there," the governor said.

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John Sandweg, the former acting director of ICE during the Obama administration, said the construction and location of the facility makes little sense. It's not near an immigration court or ICE's existing transportation infrastructure.

But with backlogs in immigration courts presenting major roadblocks to the Trump administration's stated goal of deporting one million immigrants per year, Sandweg said he believes the purpose of the facility is to encourage undocumented immigrants – whether in custody or not – to bypass the immigration courts and voluntarily leave the country to avoid the possibility of being sent there.

"I think that the real goal of Alligator Alcatraz is to instill fear," he said.

Miami Herald reporter Siena Duncan contributed reporting.

This story was originally published August 19, 2025 at 2:13 PM.

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